

**Abstract 342**

**TITLE:** Recruiting African American Families into an HIV Prevention Intervention: Focusing On the Recruiter

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**ISSUE:** Recruiting participants in a timely and cost effective manner is critical to the success of clinical research trials. In the case of African Americans, this may be challenging because they have been under served and under represented in the medical research establishment. Yet, reaching African American communities has become a necessity especially now when diseases such as prostate and colon cancer, and HIV/AIDS are prevalent within this population. Focusing on the recruiter as an essential member of the clinical research team may be the key. How recruiters conduct themselves can be crucial, especially when soliciting participation from African American communities.

**SETTING:** Eleven sites of a metropolitan, communitybased organization serving predominantly African American youth.

**PROJECT:** Keepin' It R.E.A.L.! is an HIV/AIDS prevention intervention study. In this project a total of 1152 predominantly African American mothers and their adolescents (576 mothers/576 adolescents) were to be recruited into two HIV prevention interventions and one comparison program in an 18-month period. Recruitment involved establishing relationships with the 11 sites of the community organization. Telephone recruitment was conducted by using membership lists provided by collaborators at the communitybased sites. Recruiters solicited participation from mothers and their adolescents by providing adequate information about the project, establishing rapport, and addressing concerns and fears of potential participants. Recruiters projected a positive image about the research study, and were flexible with scheduling appointments. Recruiters went the extra mile to meet potential participants where they were in their lives. Recruiters were careful to make potential participants feel comfortable about their decision to participate or not to participate. Keepin' it R.E.A.L.! recruiters focused on the participant not just as a research subject but as a person.

**RESULTS:** Recruiters successfully enrolled 583 mother and their adolescents in Keepin' It R.E.A.L.! within 19 months. Of the 1615 mothers approached, 793 were eligible for participation, 620 were base lined, and 583 chose to participate. While recruitment was challenging, focusing on specific characteristics of the recruiter, including interpersonal and communication skills, may have been essential to successfully meeting recruitment goals. Recruiters with strong communication and interpersonal skills were able to establish rapport with potential participants and maintain relationships with community collaborators in order to meet recruitment goals in a timely fashion.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** Good communication and interpersonal skills appeared to be a plus when recruiting African American mothers and their adolescents into an HIV/AIDS prevention project. Focusing on these skills and providing appropriate training for recruiters may be the key to timely accomplishment of recruitment goals.

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